

CHALLENGE



THE REVOLUTIONARY COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER OF PROGRESSIVE LABOR PARTY

Volume 53 No. 11

June 9, 2021

suggested donation \$1

ARAB & JEWISH WORKERS UNITE!

SMASH ISRAELI STATE TERROR



Nationalism continues to be the main danger in the mass movement against Israel's racist terror.

The Gaza Strip is a burial ground for thousands of workers massacred in the never-ending Palestine-Israel Conflict, with the self-serving nationalist bosses of Hamas on one side and the apartheid Israeli state, in alliance with U.S. imperialism, on the other. In the latest round of violence over 11 days in May, at

least 248 people—including 66 children—were killed in Gaza, while Israeli fatalities stood at 13 (Aljazeera.com, 5/24). The gap in death tolls is nothing new; it reflects a deliberate policy of collective punishment by the Israeli war machine and its openly racist government.

This one-sided war is also a sign of the

deepening crisis of U.S. imperialism, as Russia, China, and Iran try to expand their influence in the area. The resulting instability could become the spark that sets off a global war.

**Two toxins:
Israeli state terror,
Palestinian nationalism**

With U.S. President Joe Biden defending Israel's "right to defend itself," the murderous Netanyahu regime is unleashing its military might against Gaza's working class. As they hide behind their façade of "democracy," the Israeli rulers are committing atrocities to guarantee their profits. In out-and-out war crimes, Israeli planes bombed at least six hospitals and 50 schools, devastated electricity and water plants, and shut down Gaza's only Covid-19 testing lab (New York Times, 5/18).

As brave Gaza workers and youth rise up in the streets against impossible odds, we should ask: What is our fight in the Gaza Strip? Is it to demand an end to the Israeli occupation, the dismantlement of Jew-

Continued on page 2

JOIN THE INTERNATIONAL FIGHT FOR COMMUNIST REVOLUTION

★ **COLOMBIA** Long Live May Day..p4

★ **PAKISTAN** fighting horrendous capitalist conditions...p4



★ **OBITUARIES** Rest in power comrades...p6

★ **COMMUNIST HISTORY** The Red Army defeated the Nazis...p8

OUR FIGHT

★Progressive Labor Party (PLP) fights to destroy capitalism and the dictatorship of the capitalist class. We organize workers, soldiers and youth into a revolutionary movement for communism.

★The dictatorship of the working class — communism—can provide a lasting solution to the disaster that is today’s world for billions of people. This cannot be done through electoral politics, but requires a revolutionary movement and a mass Red Army led by PLP.

★Worldwide capitalism, in its relentless drive for profit, inevitably leads to war, fascism, poverty, disease, starvation and environmental destruction. The capitalist class, through its state power — governments, armies, police, schools and culture — maintains a dictatorship over the world’s workers. The capitalist dictatorship supports, and is supported by, the anti-working-class ideologies of racism, sexism, nationalism, individualism and religion.

★While the bosses and their mouthpieces claim “communism is dead,” capitalism is the real failure for billions worldwide. Capitalism returned to Russia and China because socialism retained many aspects of the profit system, like wages and privileges. Russia and China did not establish communism.

★Communism means working collectively to build a worker-run society. We will abolish work for wages, money and profits. While capitalism needs unemployment, communism needs everyone to contribute and share in society’s benefits and burdens.

★Communism means abolishing racism and the concept of “race.” Capitalism uses racism to super-exploit Black, Latin, Asian and indigenous workers, and to divide the entire working class.

★Communism means abolishing the special oppression of women— sexism—and divisive gender roles created by the class society.

★Communism means abolishing nations and nationalism. One international working class, one world, one Party.

★Communism means that the minds of millions of workers must become free from religion’s false promises, unscientific thinking and poisonous ideology. Communism will triumph when the masses of workers can use the science of dialectical materialism to understand, analyze and change the world to meet their needs and aspirations.

★Communism means the Party leads every aspect of society. For this to work, millions of workers — eventually everyone — must become communist organizers. Join Us!

CONTACT US

Email
desafio.challenge@gmail.com

Mail
Box 808 GPO, Brooklyn, NY 11202

Internet
www.plp.org

Twitter, Facebook, Instagram:
@PLPchallenge

WHO WRITES FOR CHALLENGE?

CHALLENGE is for the working class, produced by the working class. The fact that CHALLENGE/PLP articles are not signed grows from PLP’s criticism of the cult of the individual in the former socialist Soviet Union and China. We do not want to encourage the possibility of building up a “following” around any particular individual.

While an article may be written by one person, the final version is based on collective discussion and criticism. Many times this collective discussion even precedes an individual’s writing of an article.

CHALLENGE/DESAFIO (ISSN 0009-1049) published bi-weekly by Challenge Periodicals. 1 issue \$1. One Year: \$20. Six months: \$15. Send address changes to CHALLENGE Periodicals, GPO Box 808 Brooklyn, NY 11202, June 9,2021•Volume 53 No. 11

Editorial

Imperialist war over control of Gaza

Continued from page 1

ish settlements in the West Bank, an end to ethnic cleansing in Jerusalem, the establishment of a Palestinian state? We submit that none of this is enough. The working class deserves much more.

Progressive Labor Party condemns both the Israeli-U.S. massacre and the dead-end Palestinian nationalism promoted by Arab bosses in Gaza and the West Bank. We call instead for proletarian internationalism and communist revolution. We envision a world without profits or borders, where society will be run by and for the workers of the world. Only through the unity of Arab and Jewish workers can we defeat nationalism and smash the capitalist bosses on both sides.

What is happening in the Gaza Strip?

Since 1948, when the state of Israel was created, the people of Palestine have been violently pushed into only 20 percent of their former territory. Blockaded by both Israel and Egypt, the densely populated Gaza Strip has little water, sporadic electricity, no jobs, and no freedom of movement.

To understand how Gaza came to its current misery, we must consider the forces of nationalism, racism, and inter-imperialist rivalry in the bosses’ quest for Middle East oil. The Zionist state, backed by billions in U.S. military aid, basically stole the Palestinians’ land and condemned them to life in a de facto concentration camp while the bosses’ international organizations looked the other way (Amnesty International, 2017). The Zionist rulers’ racist and nationalist ideology has created a state of desperation among young workers in Palestine.

Capitalism divides us, communism unites us

Throughout history, the capitalists and their governments have used ethnic and racial divisions to divide workers and advance their own political and economic agendas. Workers on both sides of the bosses’ borders suffer the cost of Israel’s occupation. The poison of anti-Arab racism leads workers in Israel to accept cuts in social services to finance the country’s military.

Meanwhile, workers in Palestine are misguided into taking sides in the dispute between the corrupt West Bank bosses of the Palestinian Authority and the Islamic fundamentalists of Hamas. Neither faction has anything to offer workers. Palestine needs a mass anti-racist and revolutionary movement under communist leadership to create a society run by and for the working class.

As we march in Colombia, Chile, Italy, and all over the world to protest against the occupation of

It is no coincidence that Israeli apartheid so resembles South Africa’s apartheid system. The Israeli ruling class maintained a close relationship with the South African apartheid bosses as the main supplier of weapons to the apartheid state. Israeli soldiers advised the South African military and the South African bosses provided raw materials to help the Israeli rulers develop nuclear weapons. (The Guardian, 2010)

This went on even as the Israeli leaders, such as the liberal Yitzhak Rabin, publicly claimed to “oppose apartheid on moral and religious grounds even as it secretly strengthened the arsenal of a white supremacist government” (The Unspoken Alliance: Israel’s Secret Relationship with South Africa, 2010)

For over 20 years, between 1973 and the end of the formal apartheid system in South Africa, the Israel bosses were the closest ally of the violently racist South African ruling class.. The ties between the apartheid South African bosses and the Israeli ruling class were not just about arms. South African apartheid became the model for the racist Israeli bosses to control the working class of Palestine. “What’s left now[in Palestine] after the illegal settlements and the annexation is a series of Bantustans, which look like South African ones. ... the apartheid system in South Africa is the model...which Israel is using” (Independent.ie, 5/13).

Palestine, we must be clear that both racism and nationalism are tools used by capitalists to protect their profits. Wars between imperialists force workers to fight and kill their class brothers and sisters to protect the capitalists’ interests. History is rich with examples of unity between Arabs and Jews. Under communist leadership, we can rekindle that unity, defeat the exploiters, erase all borders, and smash the murderous capitalist governments.

The latest attacks on the working class in Gaza—and in India, Mexico, and Brazil--are driven by the international crisis of capitalism. We see it clearly in the U.S., where hundreds have died at the hands of the racist police. We see it in Colombia, where thousands have been massacred or disappeared, most recently during a general strike where 41 civilians were killed by the brutal cops.

PLP calls for workers to organize class interests, not the bosses’ rotten profit system. We call for the workers of the world to unite and fight to build a communist society without nationalism or religion, where the only flag will be red. Once workers unite in their struggle to build a communist future, it will spell the capitalist system’s demise.

Fight for communism, abolish all borders!🇵🇸

To abolish capitalism, kick kkkops out of CUNY

NEW YORK CITY, May 14—In the French Revolution Georges Danton came up with the slogan “Boldness! Again, boldness! Always, boldness!” That describes the rally today of sixty City University of New York (CUNY) students and a few faculty, multi-racial, multi-gender, and all ages marched from Hunter College to John Jay College. Their demand: abolition. Abolish the police, prisons, the carceral state, settler colonialism, racial capitalism, and imperialism.

Progressive Labor Party (PLP) would add that all these forms of oppression are a *necessity* under the capitalist system, and we cannot eliminate them without abolishing capitalism itself, altogether and everywhere! That means building an organization, an international revolutionary communist party, PLP, which works explicitly to abolish capitalism and all its oppressions and build egalitarian communism.

These new keywords of struggle come close to but don't quite say “Abolish capitalism.” But they inspire a new wave of militant youth, and here they lifted up the important specific demand to remove police from CUNY. Speakers from Hunter also described struggles to save Asian American Studies and the Center for Puerto Rican Studies there.

The march refused to get a permit, took the streets and blocked traffic, had its own medics and lawyers in our ranks, and prepared everyone to link arms and stay together in case of an incident.

A young PLP comrade joined another marcher to block traffic on Park Avenue with their bicycles. Following the 2020 summer of rebellion which taught us to rely on ourselves in struggle, these marchers were serious. You can get too used to obeying bourgeois laws.

Remove kkkops from John Jay

The boldest demand was to remove the Klan in blue from John Jay, which was founded in 1965 as the College of Police Science (COPS). “John Jay’s training programs target its majority working-class,

[Black, indigenous, Latin, and Asian] student body... to work for the institutions of organized violence,” said the pamphlet from the Cops off Campus Coalition (see box). “We believe that police and prison abolition is the work of our present and the promise of our future.” They declared May abolition month.

The event also highlighted CUNY’s collaboration with U.S. imperialist war: John Jay’s Certificate in Homeland Security, Baruch’s agreement to “a formal partnership” with the CIA, and, the program of York and City Colleges with the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC), a college program training officers for the U.S. military. Education is one part of how the ruling class legitimizes its system; colleges function to reproduce oppressive class relations and support the bosses’ aims. We cannot separate colleges from its capitalist role.

The march attracted a heavy police presence as it exited Central Park into “Lenape Circle” (erase Columbus from that circle!), passing the Trump tower and heading for John Jay and CUNY’s Office of Public Safety. At these stops, speakers called for solidarity with Palestinian workers and slammed campus policing for attacking students who fight back.

The future will be bright with a new generation of anti-capitalists. The main danger continues to be nationalist and identity politics—on campus and in the streets. PLP has to offer them the legacy of communist politics, boldness, and discipline; the organizational and political strength that comes from an experienced communist party; the long history and deep philosophy of communist workers the world over. The long march to abolish capitalism and build a society of comrades has a long past and a long future.

PLP invites every marcher at this CUNY event to come into our Party and build it up with their bold vision and action. Colleges are also an arena of fight-back against tools of capitalism: cops, ROTC, and the CIA. Say it again: Join the PLP to abolish capitalism and build an egalitarian communist world. ☸

History of racist cops in CUNY

There is one cop for every 203 students. Why so many cops? Compare: One mental health counselor for every 2,899 students; One academic advisor for every 1,104 students. The history explains why: policing at CUNY is a story of racist repression of student rebellion.

In the 1960s policing grew to smash a) the rising of nationalist Black and Puerto Rican liberation movements on campus and b) the anti-war student organizing. Today, the militarization of colleges reflect the U.S.’s larger militarization and move towards fascism as they prepare their population for war with imperialist rivals.

Cops increased after large numbers of Black and Latin students enrolled under Open Admissions in 1970.

In the 1990s, “CUNY created the Department of Public Safety (DPS)” to crush protests against tuition hikes. CUNY replaced the campus police with ‘peace officers,’ ‘authorized to make warrant-less arrests and use physical and deadly force.’”

In 1992, CUNY signed a Memorandum of Agreement to grant the NYPD access to all its campuses. “Now CUNY campus cops number over 700.” CUNY cops do the job of a political police, like surveillance of students.

In 1996 “CUNY admin admitted to deploying an armed ‘elite team’ of 33 CUNY security officers to surveil, videotape and crowd control students.”

In 2011, “an AP investigation revealed that the NYPD infiltrated CUNY Muslim student groups on campus by sending undercover agents.” Hunter College alone spends \$7,236,837 each year on ‘security’—the most out of all the CUNY campuses.

Liberal CUNY’s foul racism is clear. A system that has racism baked into it can have only one solution: abolition through communist revolution.

(Quotes sourced from a mass organization on campus, AbolitionMayCUNY).

Israeli and Hamas bosses fight – Palestinian and Israeli workers pay the price

ISRAEL-PALESTINE, May 21—Another round of warfare between Hamas and Israel ended with a ceasefire, with both Hamas and Israeli capitalists claiming “victory”. But with 13 workers killed in Israel and 258 workers killed and two thousand more wounded in Palestine, it was the working class of both sides, especially the Palestinian working class, who paid the price.

Contrary to both of the romanticized “self-defense” (Israeli propaganda) or “resistance” (Hamas propaganda) narratives pushed by the capitalist media, the cases for this latest massacre were the naked self-interest of the capitalists on both sides. The revolutionary communist Progressive Labor Party (PLP) is the only party that represents and fights for all workers in Israel-Palestine, the Middle East and the world, and the only party organizing for a mass workers’ Red Army to smash the imperialist roots of this conflict once and for all!

Hamas: a movement for millionaires

Why are bosses on both sides claiming victory? Let’s start with Hamas, the capitalists controlling the Gaza Strip. The Palestinian Authority, the government claiming to run both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, recently scheduled elections to its Legislative Council on May 22, 2021. Fatah, representing the capitalist Palestinian faction ruling the West Bank, is infamous for its corruption. Many Palestinians support Hamas – the fundamentalist Islamic movement controlling Gaza and seen as the only “alternative.” With a Hamas victory in the West Bank elections clearly expected, the Palestinian President, Mahmoud Abbas, indefinitely postponed the elections to keep the Fatah faction of Palestinian bosses in power.

Hamas would have none of that. With their road to power by electoral means blocked, they declared to represent all resistance to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the siege on the Gaza Strip. Their hope was to ignite a third mass uprising (“intifada”) in the West Bank, with themselves in com-

mand, which would ensure their takeover of the West Bank. Hamas represents a different faction of Palestinian bosses than that represented by Fatah and are more skilled at robbing workers in Gaza. Claiming to fight for a religious state in Palestine and embracing the sexism of every religious movement, Hamas bosses live in mansions in Gaza City or hotels in Doha. They are funded by Iran, by international aid sent to Gaza, as well as by heavy taxes on the local population and smuggling operations through neighboring states like Egypt (Rose al-Yusuf, 2010). While workers live in ruins, building materials sent into Gaza serve Hamas’ military and tunneling industries rather than rebuilding after Israeli bombings..

Thus, the Hamas bosses started yet another round of warfare against Israel, hoping to maneuver themselves into power in the West Bank and expand their control.

Israeli bosses’ rivalry: sharpening imperialism and fascism

Similar political motivations led Israeli bosses to go to war: factional struggles within the Israeli ruling class, as U.S. imperialism’s crisis deepens and inter-imperialist rivalry with China sharpens (see Editorial, page 2). One faction, represented by the old “Labor” Party and its allies, has been in decline for decades and is being dethroned by a newer faction, fueled by a gutter racist, mass fascist base and headed by the corrupt Benjamin Netanyahu.

But the old bosses will not give up without a fight, and Netanyahu’s infamous personal corruption presented an opportunity after Netanyahu’s mediocre electoral performance in the March 2021 elections. The “Labor” Party faction attempted to remove Netanyahu but make no mistake: these opponents of Netanyahu are not on the side of the working class. They include far-right racist capitalists such as Naftali Bennet and Ayelet Shaked, both of whom dream of budget cuts and further attacks on workers.

Sheikh Jarrah, Al-Aqsa: the fuse

Hoping to eliminate any chance of the “Labor” faction’s removal, Netanyahu’s interests for war aligned with Hamas. Netanyahu’s calls for fascist “national unity” and “self-defense” attracted rival Bennet to his side.

With the bosses on both sides building for war, the fascist Israeli police attacks on Palestinian protests against evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and attacks on workers in the Al-Aqsa Mosque lit the fuse. Hamas bombarded southern and central Israel with rockets and mortars, disrupting Israel’s economy and killing several workers. Israel responded with massive airstrikes, killing hundreds of workers and making thousands homeless. While Israel managed to kill many of Hamas’ ground commanders, its very top leaders, as well as the capitalists behind them, remain alive and rich while Israel’s ruling class is equally unscathed.

Palestinian and Israeli workers: unite under the red flag!

Workers in Palestine paid for this war with their lives and homes. Workers in Israel face an economic downturn caused by the war and higher unemployment; one in five workers already live below the poverty line, including almost one million children. Workers of the world must take a side – the working class. Supporting Hamas’ “resistance” means supporting Hamas gangsters and their big-capitalist sponsors in Qatar and Iran. Supporting Israel’s “self-defense” means supporting a mass fascist movement in Israel bent on evicting and slaughtering workers in Palestine.

PLP fights to overthrow all bosses- Palestinian and Israeli. There are no “good” bosses, there is no “national liberation” or “national defense” – all enthrone one capitalist or another on the backs of workers. There is only one solution – communist revolution! Join PLP and help us build a mass Party “from the river to the sea.” from Sheikh Jarrah to Bogotá and everywhere in between! ☸

Colombia: Long Live May Day!

COLOMBIA— union workers, teachers' associations, students, drivers, women's groups, indigenous people and a multitude of social organizations organized dozens of demonstrations in fields and cities against Duque's tax reform and warlike policy. In Bogotá, we commemorated May Day once again -- the international day of the working class. We promoted the vision of the unity of the workers of the world, under one red flag and our communist Party, the Progressive Labor Party (PLP).

Gone is another year under the rule of the capitalist criminal class and its racist wage slavery system, its endless wars, its sexism that divides us and makes us weaker, its fascism and violence against our class. Meanwhile, we have known one more year of workers' struggles, protests, strikes, mobilizations that keep us firm in our communist ideas, fighting for a better world.

The state of workers here is one of pandemic, death, misery and need. Unemployment, low wages, indigence, prostitution, crisis in the health system, malnutrition, drug addiction, a high cost of living, a fascist bourgeoisie and a "left" that kneels to them in order to defend bourgeois democracy and "national unity."

We are active in these protests to show our class, with the help of our newspaper CHALLENGE, that we fight for communist revolution. We are not negotiating to get out of wage slavery. We do not negotiate to reform capitalism, which is our declared enemy. The youth and workers are rejecting passivity, surrender and the electoral circus. The racist state cannot be reformed. it must be destroyed with a communist revolution and for this we need organized and revolutionary violence under the communist leadership of our Party.

Since the pandemic, the Duque-Uribe mafia government has kept us locked up with fear of the virus and continuous curfews. Because of the risks, this great commemoration of the workers' struggles was held more locally in 2020. This year it was held in a neighborhood in the south of the city where our Party and literature have been present for more than 20 years, making friends and building a good part of our social base.

Here we have been involved in the fight against the persecution of street vendors and police brutality. Because of this, over 40 PLP members, women and men, motivated by the current rise in the class struggle enthusiastically organized this revolutionary protest.

We started in a local park giving a discussion about the national strike and our commemoration, with our flags, banners and slogans such as "Capitalism is the pandemic, the vaccine is com-



munist" and "Long live May 1st!" We began our march towards the center of the city, accompanied by horns of cars and motorcycles and people on the sidewalks, who raised their fists in approval while others joined the protest.

Along the way, more PLP members arrived, and more community groups joined, including sports leagues of women and men, street vendors and independent workers who fight daily against racist oppression and to defeat misery. By the end of our march there were more than 350 people, whom we tried to organize on the basis of unity of the international working class. Against the fascist state, communist revolution is the best weapon!

With people from other organizations we agreed to continue participating in the sit-ins, cacerolazos (protests in which we bang pots and pans), mass community assemblies and the strike committees organized by workers. Many enthusiastically ac-

cepted our message of unity and our literature and flyers in which we made a call to communist revolution as a response of our class to the capitalist pandemic, to the sexist brutality and murder of the police state against more than 45 young protesters during the recent general strike.

At one point, some older people with medical comorbidities isolated themselves trying to avoid possible COVID infections, while most of the protesters continued to the north of the city under a heavy downpour of rain. The air was thick with the siege and strong smell of gases fired by the esmad (riot police), but we pressed on.

Hours later a group of workers ended up making an analysis of what was done, congratulating those youth, students, and workers for their drive and courage—above all for being friends, supporters and collaborators of our innovative communist PLP, fighting for workers' power worldwide.☺

Pakistan May Day: fighting horrendous capitalist conditions

PAKISTAN—Unlike past years, this year's May Day was a less than jubilant celebration. This was because of a lockdown due to a third wave of Covid-19. Yet, Progressive Labor Party continues to call for fightback and communism.

Progressive Labor Party participated in seminars held under strict guidelines to prevent the spread of the disease. The ruling class failed to do mass testing, and is not making any arrangements to import vaccines. Instead, Pakistan's bosses are spending countless money on their luxurious lifestyle and security but not on vaccines. The government is still begging the World Health Organization aof storage capacity and proper logistics, it is rumored that some vaccines are doomed to spoil. Poor working class people are dying because of lack of vaccination and testing, but the bosses are too busy updating the Exit Control List.

Working class people are dying because of the high infection rate. Meanwhile the bosses are fooling workers with lollipop election reforms. As workers die due to lack of oxygen tanks, ventilators, and vaccines, ruling elites babble endlessly about the advantages of electronic voting. What's worse, bosses are crying about not being able to afford the vaccine, while spending money on importing elec-



CAPITALISM IS THE VIRUS. COMMUNISM IS THE CURE.

@plpchallenge | plp.org

tronic voting machines. Workers are still in search of vacant hospital beds, but the government is talking about the corruption of past ruling parties to divert working-class people's attention from real issues. Covid-19 tests are scarce; the infection rate is

high, with some areas reaching 50 percent.

Masses of workers and PL'ers are fighting to increase the minimum wage during this escalating inflation. Growing prices of basic commodities are making the life of workers miserable. Every day we read news about workers who are forced to suicide because they have nothing to eat. Comrades also condemned the role of the International Monetary Fund and other monetary institutions for instructing the government to take steps according to the will of the international capitalist class.

Comrades emphasized that a ban on trade unions is a trick of bosses to make a huge profit by robustly exploiting the workers. The politicians are there to solve the problems of the working class, but they are just planning to make more and more profits for the bosses. The ruling class is getting richer but workers have little to feed themselves and their children.

Comrades are confident fighting against inequality, injustice, poverty, illiteracy, fundamentalism and nationalism under the red banner of the international communist Progressive Labor Party. Long live Communism!☺

Graduate workers, strike against capitalism



Grad workers and students deserve better; they deserve communism!

NEW YORK CITY—As the clock struck 12am on April 26, New York University (NYU) graduate workers brought the work they do to sustain the university to a halt and took to the picket line. The strike represents one step in the fight against capitalist exploitation. Changing—rather abolishing—this exploitative class relationship requires communist revolution through an international party, PLP.

Grad workers are fed up

These actions came after 10 months of unsuccessfully negotiating with NYU for a living wage, affordable healthcare, and protection for international students, just to name a few grievances. NYU,

which sits on a \$4.7 billion endowment and is one of the largest landlords and real estate developers in New York State, responded by deeming the strike “unwarranted, untimely, and regrettable.” For the university, graduate student workers who made \$20/hr at up to 20hrs/week “are among the best compensated in the U.S.” (<https://bit.ly/3b5g4Mo>).

With high-spirits, graduate students are pressuring the university. Spirited chants such as “What’s disgusting? Union busting! What’s Outrageous? NYU wages!” fill the air while poignant speeches capture the hearts of supporters and curious onlookers. The bargaining demands highlight graduate workers’ understanding of the racist and

sexist underpinnings that define and structure capitalism.

On the table, for example, are calls for NYU to cut ties with the NYPD, calls to protect international students from ICE and other Custom Border agents, and calls for support for workers with families. But these demands point to a world that the capitalist system can never provide. When NYU graduate student workers and auto workers from Mexico and nurses from Palestine run the world then we can have an egalitarian world. That’s communism. Let’s add that to our fight for higher wages and against racism.

Pressure on the NYU bosses

The strike so far has pressured NYU to make some concessions. More pressure from students and supporters alike is needed since the university is refusing to budge on several key issues such as wages (at one point the university offered an insulting \$1 increase), tuition waivers for master students, and its NYPD ties. Fortunately, the graduate strikers remain undaunted, both at the bargaining table and on the picket line.

They have garnered attention from Democratic senator, Bernie Sanders, NY mayoral candidate, Diana Morales, and other liberal politicians. While support from these politicians attest to the strength of the strike, such support should make strikers wary of politicians who see these moments of struggle as an opportunity to channel workers’ fight into U.S. imperialist support.

Like their counterparts at Columbia University and the striking nurses in Massachusetts, these striking graduate workers are demonstrating that it is pivotal that workers take to the streets if they want to gain even a modicum of crumbs from the bosses. Meaningful change will only come about under communism, however. Under communism, workers will no longer need to fight for basic necessities. Wages and profit will be abolished, along with the borders that perpetuate inequality. Racism and sexism will remain bloodsucking characteristics of a bygone capitalist order. The vision for a communist world, led by the revolutionary Progressive Labor Party, should guide all of our fights against the capitalist bosses. ☛

MLA: push limits of reform, fight for communism

NEW JERSEY, April 30—On the day before May Day, over 65 faculty, academic workers, graduate and undergraduate students participated in a virtual forum on “Class and Struggle in Higher Education,” organized by the Radical Caucus (RC) of the Modern Language Association (MLA). The forum’s theme, described by the opening speaker as “the systemic failure of capitalism to meet the needs of the great majority of the world’s people,” reflected the growing mass anger and fightback in higher education in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Even more important, however, the forum demonstrated the sharpening of Progressive Labor Party’s (PLP) work among academics, addressing immediate concerns about the crisis in academic labor but also emphasizing the need for current organizing to be guided by a revolutionary outlook.

In response to the call to build a mass national—and international—higher education worker-student-faculty movement, nine speakers reported on sharp struggles they helped lead: winning a 4.5 percent raise for a new grad-student-worker union at Brown, leading a wildcat strike of grad workers at UC Santa Cruz, starting a union at Duke University Press, combating passive union leadership and calling for a strike at two New Jersey campuses, fighting for adjuncts at CUNY, and adjuncts at a Canadian campus challenging full-time faculty to wake up to their duty of care and solidarity. A lecturer from Haiti urged attendees to “use every

means possible to bring revolutionary ideas into the universities with the goal of raising student consciousness and integrating militant, Marxist-revolutionary ideas into the campus.”

The April 30 forum grew out of three RC-sponsored events at the January 2021 MLA Convention: two RC panels -- on “Climate Activist Pedagogies” and “The Post-Pandemic University” -- and the RC’s annual meeting, all held virtually. Attendees strongly encouraged the RC to use the opportunity of virtual meetings to organize activities throughout the year; a core group of new and long-standing RC and PLP members volunteered to organize the pre-May Day forum on class struggles in higher education. The forum also drew upon the activism and relationships established by the long-term work of Party members in the CUNY Professional Staff Caucus (union) and the Marxist Literary Group as well as PLP membership in the MLA Radical Caucus since its founding in the crucible of the Vietnam War.

One key decision was to focus the opening talk on the importance of understanding the political economy of present-day capitalism, so that our organizing activities can draw the necessary connections between the crisis in higher education and the shifting needs of the ruling class which has produced, in the words of the opening speaker, the current “obscenity of economic inequality.” The conference looked at the effects of this kind

of crisis, a general capitalist crisis deepened by financialization and globalization and imperialist rivalry, on faculty and students in universities. One of the key challenges facing communist organizing when mass anger erupts into class struggle, is the illusion workers have that liberal reforms can bring about real change, but history has shown us over and over that reforms will be reversed when struggle dies because the laws of capitalism depend on the drive for profit. Only a communist revolution can fundamentally change the lives of workers, since we will eliminate exploitation and capitalism.

Participants concluded the conference with plans to pursue three initiatives: (1) to build a network of radical academic organizations across disciplines; (2) to hold a second forum in the fall on “the new keywords of our struggle,” that looks at the way in which influential new terminology—terms like “intersectionality” and “social justice”—has drawn people into struggle but also limited them to reformism; and (3) to research and promote new initiatives and campaigns for academic labor organizing.

Members and friends in PLP have a pivotal role to play in this effort, developing deeper ties with fellow workers and students through discussions, study groups, and struggles. A key lesson of the forum was the necessity of having a long-term approach to communist organizing and Party building and having confidence in our fellow workers. ☛

★ Rest in Power Comrades ★

Remembering Laszlo Berkovits

Three comrades remember Laszlo Berkovits
October 2, 1946 – April 19, 2021

At CCNY and in Central Europe

In 1968, at City College of New York, I was giving out Progressive Labor Party (PLP) leaflets inviting people to a demonstration against the U.S. war on Vietnam. A student read the leaflet and approached me. His name was Laszlo Berkovits and he was Hungarian. I thought he might be an anti-communist Hungarian refugee. The slide rule hanging from his belt indicated he was a math, science, or engineering major. Most leftist students were liberal arts majors. But no, Laszlo said he had studied Marxism in high school in Hungary. He thought it was a scientific analysis of capitalism and agreed with the leaflet. He started participating in our anti-war activities, joined the Students for a Democratic Society chapter, read CHALLENGE, and soon joined PLP.

In January 1969 Laszlo and Edna met while washing dishes at a birthday party. They married in 1970 and were together until April of this year, when ALS (Lou Gehrig's disease) claimed Laszlo far too soon. They loved their 2 children and 3 wonderful grandchildren, and they extended their love to sons-in-law. Laszlo, a master soup chef, cooked soups for the family every Friday evening.

My wife and I travelled through Central Europe with Laszlo and Edna in 2012. We visited several Jewish cemeteries where Laszlo's relatives were buried — those who had not been murdered by the Nazis. Laszlo had a deep-seated hatred of fascism. In Budapest, we had dinner with about 10 of Laszlo's high school friends. It was obvious that they loved and respected him. At Laszlo's hometown, Salgótarján, we had dinner with another 10 of his high school friends; one subscribed to CHALLENGE.

People everywhere counted him among their best friends. He loved people, took an interest in them and their families, and their problems. As a communist, he looked for the best in people. He believed that working people could unite to overthrow capitalism and rid the world of racism, sexism and the other horrors it generates.

We often sing Bella Ciao at PLP events. When we sing, "Soy comunista toda la vida," I see Laszlo, truly "a communist all his life."

At New York University Hospital and in New Jersey

Laszlo's kind personality was not in contradiction to his fighting spirit and staunch antiracism. In 1979, while working at NYU Hospital, Laszlo and two comrades mounted a campaign against harassment and regular searches of the predominantly Black and Latin workers by hospital security guards. Threats of disciplinary action did not stop Laszlo and others. They even led workers to loudly picket a hospital administrator's home.

When Laszlo and his comrades were disciplined by the hospital bosses, they filed grievances, which were dismissed by the administration and by an "impartial" arbitrator. They then hired a militant labor lawyer.

After a long battle at the National Labor Relations Board and a federal court, and supported by rank-and-file actions, NYU was forced to rescind all the disciplinary actions, and issue back pay.

Laszlo and his family moved from the Bronx to Teaneck, NJ in 1982. The Party there joined with parents and launched campaigns against racism in the schools and against racist police terror. As these battles continued, Laszlo and Edna encouraged their children to become active antiracists.

Laszlo had a sharp internationalist perspective. He understood that the fall of the old communist movement had given new life to world capitalism. He worked with other comrades to analyze the rise of imperialist



Laszlo at a May Day march (date unknown).
He is the bearded man in a green jacket in the foreground.

China and why imperialist rivalry between China and the U.S. would inevitably lead to war.

More class struggle in New Jersey

When Laszlo and Edna moved to Teaneck, they helped us develop a PLP collective with two other families. In joyful cooperation we helped each other raise our children with communist values. In 1982 we organized support for the township's striking teachers, who were thrown in jail for their efforts.

Edna and Laszlo became active in the Bergen Society for Ethical Culture, which in the mid 1980s had declared sanctuary for refugees and asylum seekers. They supported expanding this fight and joined in the Society's effort to work for climate justice. Laszlo was also a regular participant in many of the Society's forums and gatherings. Only two weeks before his death, Laszlo spoke about David Bohm and Ilya Prigogine, scientists whose works have contributed to our understanding of the communist philosophy of dialectical materialism.

Farewell dear comrade. Farewell dear friend. Who you were and what you have done will live vividly within each of us and will continue to help shape an emerging communist world as long as the working class lives.

★★★★★★

Bella Ciao to Comrade Sandy

On May 12 our comrade, Sandy Spier, lost her 10 month fight with a brutally aggressive colon cancer.



Sandy joined the Progressive Labor Party (PLP) some fifty years ago while living in Minnesota. At the time, PLP was organizing to fight against the imperialist Vietnam War. We were also spearheading the fight against academic racism. At a time when Black workers were leading a strike wave across the U.S. and rebellions in the inner cities and were at the forefront of the fight within the military against the war, a group of academic prostitutes came up with theories that Black workers were destined to be violent and stay poor because of genetics. PL led the charge disproving these racist ideas. We were also trying to build alliances between the struggles of workers and students. The friends she made in Minnesota remained her friends for years. People throughout the Midwest remember her coming to marches and summer projects.

About 20 years ago she moved to New York City where she has been active ever since. After a couple of years, she began working at Downstate Medical Center. She became active in the union, United University Professionals, and was known for advancing ideas of anti-racism, multi-racial unity, and supporting other workers, both in the U.S. and around the world. She was ever a voice for more militant fight back. She helped organize a demonstration outside Downstate on the first day of Desert Storm. More recently, when Downstate was threatened with closure, she spearheaded a large demonstration outside the hospital with the help of Occupy Wall Street which the union joined. That rally set the tone for future demonstrations.

Meanwhile, whenever there was a demonstration against a racist murder by cop, or in support of striking workers, or against attacks on immigrants, or in support of workers in other countries, struggling against their terrible conditions, Sandy was there.

Sandy also loved music. She always rode the May Day buses armed with song sheets to get people singing. She sang for a few years in a choral group in Brooklyn. She organized a holiday party every year that brought together her friends from work, church, and other activities. She bought a home in Jim Thorpe, Pennsylvania and in her time up there she got involved with folks fighting back. She traveled the world, searching out her relatives in Norway. As late as February, 2020 she and a friend took a snowmobile trip up into the wilds of Norway and she got to see the northern lights from within the Arctic circle.

From Minnesota to Flatbush to Jim Thorpe, on the job, in her neighborhoods with family, Sandy built and maintained ties with scores of people.

She never missed a May Day march, wheth-

Continued on page 7

Obituaries continued

Continued from page 6

er in Chicago, Washington, D.C. or Flatbush. This year May Day was less than two weeks before she died. One of her comrades called her on his cell and let her hear and see our 2021 May Day march.

There is a song that PLP has adapted from a version sung by Italian partisans fighting the Nazis in World War II called “Bella Ciao” (Beautiful Goodbye). “I go out in the morning to fight the oppressor. Bella Ciao. If I die in combat, Bella Ciao. Take my gun into your hands.” Bella ciao, Sandy. We will remember your quiet good humor, your ready laugh and your unwavering dedication to the fight of the world’s working class for a communist future. With you in our hearts, we will continue the struggle.

★★★★★★

Long-time supporter of communism, Len Ragozin

Len Ragozin, a long-time supporter of the fight for communism, died on May 13 at the age of 92. Len absorbed his working-class consciousness from the women in his family. His mother lived through the Russian Revolution in 1917, immigrated to the U.S., and was renowned in the family for translating for Stalin during a return trip to Russia.

His Aunt Rachel was a founding member of the U.S. Communist Party.

Len grew up in an environment where his family argued politics around the dinner table and the communist contingent did more than hold their own.

From an early age, he identified with the interests of the working class. Even as a child, as Len liked to say, he was “against the fat cats.”

After graduating from Harvard, Len got involved in the union organizing movement in Memphis, Tennessee, where he took a factory job.

After getting fired for organizing, he found another factory job and got fired once more. This cycle continued until the Korean War broke out and Len was drafted. In the military, Len kept organizing. He talked with other soldiers about the war and why the U.S. “fat cats” sending them to fight the Chinese communist army cared only about their profits.

He gained a reputation on base as someone who wasn’t scared to tell the truth. The military responded with several threatening letters. But after seeing that Len wasn’t going to shut up, they discharged him and sent Len home.

Upon returning to New York, Len got a job at Newsweek magazine as a researcher. Two FBI agents came to his office and asked him to name names of any communists he knew in college. He refused, even as they threatened to get him fired. Len held firm and sent them packing.

Len met Progressive Labor Party (PLP) in the early days of the Party when our founding chairperson, Milt Rosen, was teaching a class at the Free



University of New York. Len had a photographic memory and had read virtually everything written by Marx and Lenin. In the early 1970s, before a large crowd in Greenwich Village, Len debated a fake Marxist who was being promoted by the liberal press. He systematically took apart every argument the revisionist made while referencing Marx and Lenin—citing not just the original documents, but also the page numbers!

Len went on to become a long-time supporter of PLP, volunteering to help with CHALLENGE, writing articles and contributing ideas from his many years of experience in the class struggle. He always took great interest and joy in reports on the Party’s organizing activities on the job, in the schools, and in the neighborhoods. Throughout his life, Len Ragozin was a staunch supporter of the working class.



RED EYE ON THE NEWS . . .

Abbreviations

NYT= New York Times
GW=Gaurdian Weekly

ICE prisons, a dangerous place for Covid-19

NYT The United States currently has the largest immigration detention system in the world. On any given day,...ICE holds tens of thousands of people in about 200 facilities across the country. And... have become some of the most dangerous places in the United States ...[for] Covid-19 outbreaks....

ICE detention facilities had an average infection rate five times that of prisons and 20 times that of the general population....

The La Palma Correctional Center...found repeated violations of mask-wearing and social-distancing protocols....Detainees staged peaceful protests...to these conditions, and were violently punished by detention staff....

Infections inside detention centers have ripple effects in surrounding communities....Researchers found...[this] pattern at nine other ICE facilities that experienced large outbreaks in Texas, Florida, Georgia, Arizona, Louisiana and California....

...A vast majority of ICE detainees are held in facilities run...by private prison companies, which are not required to share information with the public.

U.S. women’s unpaid labor worth \$1.5 TRILLION

NYT The pandemic has laid bare the reality that motherhood is many jobs. Even before Covid-19 shut schools and forced 2.3 million women off the workforce, women were spending an average of 28 hours a week doing unpaid work.... Women of all ages and races, income brackets and employment statuses, spend over a third more time on unpaid labor than their male counterparts do.

Yet women’s labor isn’t valued.... Unpaid housework isn’t included in the gross domestic product, even though...domestic work around the world amounts to 10 percent to 60 percent of G.D.P.... If American women earned minimum wage for their unpaid care-taking and housekeeping work, they would have made \$1.5 trillion in 2019.

...In 2020, women around the world missed

out on \$800 billion in income as the lost jobs or left them to care for their families....One study found that, over a 15-year period, women who took even a year off from paid employment earned 39 percent less than women who worked without pause.

Biden protected kkkops, criminalized Black workers

New Yorker (Jill Lepore) Joe Biden said...in 1982.... “You’re in as much jeopardy in the streets as you are from Soviet missiles.”Biden and other Democrats...introduced...the Comprehensive Crime Control Act of 1984. A decade later, as chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Biden helped draft the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act, whose provisions included mandatory sentencing. In May 1991, two months after the Rodney King beating, Biden introduced the Police Officers’ Bill of Rights, which provided protection for police under investigation....Because of Biden’s record of championing law enforcement, the National Association of Police Organizations endorsed the Obama-Biden ticket in 2008 and 2012.

El Salvador: U.S.-trained death squad murdered 1,000 villagers

NYT El Mazote....Salvadoran troops murdered almost 1,000 villagers here from Dec. 11 to Dec. 13, 1981 the largest single massacre in Latin America’s contemporary history....

Washington was deeply involved in that war, with the U.S. military training Salvadoran troops and equipping them with planes, guns and bombs. A U.S. military advisor was in Moorazán during the Mozote massacre....

...Washington [has a] history of supporting repressive regimes that carry out atrocities against civilians

Prisons are Covid-19 death traps, especially for Black inmates

NYT America’s prisons, jails and detention centers...[are] the nation’s most dangerous places... [for] infections from the coronavirus, each day... [reporting] more than 1,400 new inmate infections and seven deaths, on average, inside those facilities.

The cramped, often unsanitary settings...have been ideal for incubating and transmitting disease.

Social distancing is not an option....The incarcerated [are] desperate for ways to avoid getting sick.

At an immigration center in Farmville, Va., nearly every detainee 229 was infected. And at the Fresno County Jail in California, where most people...have not yet been convicted, more than 3,800 were sickened.

....One in three people incarcerated in state prisons...have had the virus.... In federal facilities...39 percent...have been infected. The true count is most likely higher....The coronavirus hit the Black population particularly hard, with disproportionate rates of deaths.... African-Americans are...accounting for 33 percent of prisoners, but making up just 13 percent of the nation’s population....At least 2,700 have died in custody, where access to quality health care is poor....These deaths, and many of the more than 525,000 infections so far among the incarcerated, could have been prevented, public health and criminal justice experts say....

Correctional institutions have continuously failed to take even the most basic lifesaving measures to protect incarcerated people....One Texas prison failed to supply sufficient soap, left sinks in disrepair and banned hand sanitizers....The most significant impediment...has been the crowding.... Since the 1980s, the nation’s prison population has increased more than 500 percent....Prisons have shifted to...people sleeping in double- or triple-tiered bunks.... [The] virus...hopped from bed to bed....As the coronavirus ripped through California’s San Quentin State Prison....some died in their sleep. Some were too ill to stand. Some passed out and never regained consciousness. At least 124 facilities nationwide...[had] outbreaks...similar or more severe than San Quentin’s, with at least 60 percent infected....

Tens of thousands of people awaiting trial were held in local jails where the virus was surging.... Some of the nation’s largest outbreaks have occurred in county jails....Many people who could not post bail languish[ed] in jails with a heightened risk of exposure....

“It’s inevitable that once that new strain gets here, it’s going to spread like wildfire...” a prisoner...in Michigan said... “So we’re basically just sitting back...until we get sick.”

TRUTH ABOUT D-DAY: THE RED ARMY DEFEATED THE NAZIS



On the occasion of the 77th anniversary of D-Day, the U.S.-British invasion of Nazi-occupied Western Europe on June 6, 1944, we'll hear lies telling us how the U.S. won the Second World War. The decisive role of the Soviet Red Army and working class will be deliberately underplayed or ignored altogether to avoid recognizing the fact that it was the communist-led Soviet Union, under the leadership of Josef Stalin—not the U.S.—that defeated Hitler's Nazi armies.

As Benjamin Schwarz, national editor of the Atlantic Monthly, wrote in the New York Times, "Military historians have always known that the main scene of the Nazis' downfall was the Eastern Front, which claimed 80 percent of all German military casualties in the war.... The four-year conflict between the Wehrmacht and the Red Army remains the largest and possibly most ferocious ever fought,...arguably the single most important chapter in modern military history."

During the entire war, more than 70 percent of the active fascist troops in Europe were fighting the Red Army. The British were engaging only four German divisions in North Africa. When the Allies landed in western France on the Normandy beaches, they faced only three German divisions. The main reason was that more than 100 divisions from all over Europe had to be rushed to the East where the Red Army was moving 40 miles a day westward, crushing the fascist forces. More than a million Nazi troops were destroyed just by Soviet partisan units

behind enemy lines, more than all the U.S. and British forces had destroyed during the entire war.

Over 25 million Soviet workers and soldiers died fighting Hitler's armies. The U.S. lost 400,000 all told, in Europe and the Pacific.

In the winter of 1941, when the Nazis approached Moscow, 25 miles from the Kremlin, the entire population rose up in defense. Men joined the militia units at the front. Women and youth spent weeks out in the bitter cold, digging anti-tank ditches. Then the Soviet forces counter-attacked, pushing the enemy more than 100 miles from the city. This was the first large-scale defeat suffered by the Nazis. It was the beginning of their annihilation, six months after they had invaded. The New York Times military editor, Hanson Baldwin, along with scores of Western "experts," had predicted the Soviets would be defeated in six weeks.

The turning point came in the battle of Stalingrad, in the winter of 1942-43, which virtually all capitalist historians have called the turning point of World War II. Soviet defenders fought battles house-to-house. Women and men voluntarily remained at their machines making tanks for the battlefield just outside their factories while bombs fell all around them. Stalingrad stands as a shining example of the communist spirit. The Soviets surrounded and destroyed three fascist armies, causing 1.5 million Nazi casualties. After Stalingrad, the battlefield moved in only one direction — westward toward Germany.

From 1941 to the spring of 1944, U.S.-British strategy was to wait until the Nazis and Soviets were fatigued fighting each other and then enter the war to get quick victories. They had delayed opening a second front in France for two years, until mid-1944, when it became apparent that if they didn't the Soviets would be able to liberate all of Europe from the Nazi yoke. The Second Front was opened to stop the communist advance beyond Berlin.

In *A War to Be Won* (Harvard, 2009) by historians Williamson Murray and Allan Millett, they called the Soviets' brilliant use of encirclement and what they called "deep battle" — extremely far-reaching advances behind the enemy's lines — the most innovative and devastating display of "operational art" in World War II. Col. David Glantz, of the U.S. War College, marveled that close to one-half of wartime Soviet operations involving hundreds of thousands of Red Army soldiers are simply "missing from history," either neglected or covered up.

So when the imperialists praise the U.S "victors" in World War II, the workers of the world should salute the true heroes who defeated the Nazi armies, the communist-led Red Army and working class of the Soviet Union.✿

SUBSCRIBE or RENEW!

All the communist politics, news, and struggle
from around the world!
one-year subscription: \$20 individual \$45 for institution

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Make check or money order to:
Challenge Periodicals,
PO Box 808, Brooklyn, NY 11202

